

## PARENT GUIDE

# HOW DOES GOD GUIDE US?

## WEEK SEVEN

Don't you wish God would just say outright what He wants us to do?

Surely, this happens sometimes to people through visions and such, but that's not the only way that the Lord speaks to us.

Sometimes, we just need to listen for Him a little bit more closely. He can speak in all sorts of ways: through scripture, through people in your life, through nature, etc.

Are you paying attention? And are you really willing to do what the Lord is calling you to?



**Kids Ministry Staff**  
at University Carillon

## EXPLORING THE QUESTION

### MAIN IDEA

God has a plan for your life. God can guide us to know His plan for us through reading the Bible, praying, through other people, and other ways.

### CONVERSATION

*(questions your kids may ask you)*

- What do you need guidance on?
- Can you think of a time in your life that God has given you guidance?

### RESOURCES

- Adult Alpha guide
- Excerpt from "Engaging Theology" Textbook
- Video: The Bible Project - "Who Is God?"

ALL RESOURCES AVAILABLE AT:  
[universitycarillon.net/AlphaKids](http://universitycarillon.net/AlphaKids)



*Get in touch.*

[kids@universitycarillon.net](mailto:kids@universitycarillon.net)

### ▶ ALPHA ADULT GUIDE: WEEK SEVEN

See next page(s) for the Adult Alpha guide.

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### ▶ EXCERPT FROM "ENGAGING THEOLOGY"

See next page(s) for the resource pulled from the theology textbook, "Engaging Theology."

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### ▶ VIDEO: THE BIBLE PROJECT - "WHO IS GOD?"

Explore the complex identity of God in the storyline of the Bible and the implications of a God who exists in a constant state of communal love.

### WATCH VIDEO

- ▶ Want to discuss this question further?  
Reach out to one of our pastors by emailing  
[pastors@universitycarillon.net](mailto:pastors@universitycarillon.net)

# WEEK SEVEN

How does **Good** guide us



## ALPHA GUIDE

‘For we are God’s masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things he planned for us long ago.’ (Ephesians 2:10, NLT)

Why involve God in the decisions we make?

- God promises to guide us
  - (Psalm 32:8)
  - (John 10:3–4,27)
- God has a good plan for our lives
  - (Jeremiah 29:11)
  - (Romans 12:2)
  - (John 10:10,15)

How does God guide us?

### 1. COMMANDING SCRIPTURE

- General will
  - General instruction for marriage, work, money, children, elderly relatives (2 Timothy 3:16; Psalm 119:105, 130–133)
- Primary calling
  - To love God
  - To love others
  - To become like Jesus

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## 2. COMPELLING SPIRIT

- God speaks as you pray (Acts 13:1–3)
- Strong desire to do something
  - ‘God works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose’ (Philippians 2:13)
- Sometimes he guides in more unusual ways
  - Prophecy, eg Agabus (Acts 11:27–28; 21:10–11)
  - Dreams (Matthew 1:20)
  - Visions/pictures (Acts 16:10)
  - Angels (Genesis 18; Matthew 2:19; Acts 12:7)
  - Audible voice (1 Samuel 3:4–14)

## 3. COUNSEL OF THE SAINTS

- ‘... the wise listen to advice’ (Proverbs 12:15)
- ‘Make plans by seeking advice’ (Proverbs 20:18)
- Need for testing (1 John 4:1)
  - Is it in line with the Bible?
  - Is it loving? (1 John 4:16)
  - Is it strengthening, encouraging and comforting? (1 Corinthians 14:3)
  - Does it bring the peace of God? (Colossians 3:15)

Ultimately, we are responsible for our decisions, but it is a blessing to have others to talk to about the decisions we are making.

## 4. COMMON SENSE

- ‘Reflect on what I am saying, for the Lord will give you insight into all this’ (2 Timothy 2:7)

**‘God’s promises  
of guidance were not  
given to save us the  
problem of thinking’**

JOHN STOTT

## 5. CIRCUMSTANTIAL SIGNS

- ‘And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.’ (Romans 8:28)
- ‘In your heart you plan your course, but the Lord determines your steps’ (Proverbs 16:9; Psalm 37:5)
- Sometimes God closes doors (Acts 16:7)
- Sometimes God opens doors (1 Corinthians 16:9)
- Sometimes we need to persevere despite the circumstances and trust God
- Be patient
- We all make mistakes – God forgives (Joel 2:25)

## **An excerpt from Engaging Theology (Chapter 4: Revelation) pages 97-98:**

### **“Doing What Is Right in Their Own Eyes”: Questions of Authority**

Critical of society, the book of Judges concludes with the observation that everyone was doing what was “right in their own eyes” (Judg 21:25 NRSV). These days, it takes some persuasion to convince people that this was a very bad circumstance. After all, today people tend to think that mature and authentic people decide for themselves. The virtually unquestioned moral good for our culture is for something to be “authentic” and therefore self-chosen. By contrast, we hold up the Bible as an adjudicating source—we are bound to it, defer to it, and entrust ourselves to it. Acknowledging or yielding to authority is unpopular today. But it works in a variety of ways which often intersect. We can be influenced by an external power or consequence. When we obey a traffic sign we are recognizing the claims of a community to regulate traffic. Sometimes we follow instructions because we love the person (or institution) instructing us. Think of a strong young person obeying their feeble grandparent out of love, admiration, or trust. Sometimes we act or obey because a conviction or idea is true or inspiring. If we come to acknowledge the Bible’s authority, many things will influence us along the way: we may obey a commandment for fear of punishment or consequence, out of respect for our family or community, out of love and trust for a wise mentor, or because we think the command captures a compelling and true insight. Eventually and most importantly our trust of the Bible will be rooted in a deep love and trust for God and the beautiful and inspiring gospel.

### **Whom Should I Marry? What Job Should I Take?**

Christians commonly seek God’s guidance. It is wise to look for answers to pressing questions within the scope of an ongoing pilgrimage of discipleship. The task of learning and loving the God of Scripture comes first. In Proverbs 3:5–6, God promises to set us on a “straight path” (rather than a crooked and immoral one) if we follow his guidance as laid out in Scripture. Taking the right steps daily allows us to be prepared to follow him in the big decisions of life. Like with language learning, you cannot have a conversation unless you are able to say simple phrases.

The larger questions of marriage and jobs build upon this daily quest. God sets general (moral) boundaries, but gives us freedom to choose according to his wisdom. We believe God can and does provide guidance through many means. God could give special direction in the words of Scripture beyond their normal meaning. Though New Testament writers often attended to the historical or literary meaning of the text, they

modeled this hermeneutic when they found broader meanings from Old Testament passages. Similarly, you may sense God is telling you to leave home when reading Abraham was told to leave home. Some might call reading Scripture in this way under special leadership of the Holy Spirit a “charismatic” reading. People who emphasize this conversational approach believe that God speaks personally in Scripture. Strictly speaking, biblical authority supports the notion that God told Abraham to leave home but not that you are instructed to leave home; the personal instruction rests on whether you rightly discerned God’s voice. Reading the Bible in community helps us confirm our sense of God’s guidance (we “test the spirits”). We should read the Bible for ourselves, but not only by ourselves.

### **Further Considerations**

Knowing God through his revelation is foundational to Christian experience. Let us suggest a few other topics to consider for your personal reflection and application:

- **Memorizing Scripture.** The Scripture that we know and treasure in our hearts is a resource for life. People from almost every imaginable circumstance (the sick, the sad, even prisoners of war) testify to the sustaining power of Scripture. A phrase or word can form or inform a decision, a day, or a lifetime.
- **Community.** God has provided the church and its leaders to shape us (e.g. 1 Cor 12; 14; Eph 4). These fellow wayfarers are indispensable as we learn about and hear from God.
- **Testing the Spirits.** Not every idea or teaching about God or theology is right, so we are called to discern if there is false teaching (2 Pet 2), or “test the spirits” (1 John 4:1–6). One way to test a teaching is to compare it to the teachings of Christ and to the full witness of Scripture. Another important test is to listen to the community of God (both present and past) to see how God has shaped their perspective on this topic.

Every theologian mentioned in this book studied theology in order to know God. Our learning is not an end in itself. Remember the threefold Word of God (the concentric circles)? We must not settle to remain in the content of the Church’s teaching and preaching (the preached Word). This Word presses us toward the Scriptures (the written Word). Abiding in the Scriptures, as blessed as this is, calls us to move toward Christ (the revealed Word). Revealed Scripture does so much for us, but it should move us finally to embrace Christ, who reveals the triune God working through the whole narrative of Scripture.